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Trump withdraws Rep. Elise Stefanik's nomination for UN ambassador, citing tight GOP House margin

By **FARNOUSH AMIRI** and **LISA MASCARO**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced Thursday that he was pulling Rep. Elise Stefanik's nomination to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, a stunning turnaround for his Cabinet pick after her confirmation had been stalled for months over concerns about Republicans' tight margins in the House.

Trump confirmed he was withdrawing the New York Republican's nomination in a Truth Social post, saying that it was "essential that we maintain EVERY Republican Seat in Congress."

"We must be unified to accomplish our Mission, and Elise Stefanik has been a vital part of our efforts from the very beginning. I have asked Elise, as one of my biggest Allies, to remain in Congress," the president said. He did not say whom he would nominate to replace her and fill his last remaining Cabinet seat.

The abrupt withdrawal reflects growing concern among House Republicans, led by Speaker Mike Johnson, that their historically slim majority could be at risk, particularly ahead of two special elections in



Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., testifies during a Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on her pending confirmation to be the United Nations Ambassador, on Capitol Hill, Jan. 21, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

Florida next week. The loss of a mere handful of seats could swing the House majority to Democrats and derail their efforts to enact Trump's sweeping agenda in the months ahead.

Johnson praised Stefanik, the former No. 4 House leader, as "selfless" and "patriotic" after Trump announced the move.

"It is well known Republicans have a razor-thin House majority, and Elise's agreement to withdraw her

nomination will allow us to keep one of the toughest, most resolute members of our Conference in place to help drive forward President Trump's America First policies," Johnson said in a post on X. He added that he "will invite her to return to the leadership table immediately," although its unclear what position she would take since there are no vacancies.

Stefanik's office did not immediately respond to a re-

quest for comment.

Trump had tapped Stefanik to represent the U.S. at the international body shortly after winning reelection in November. She was seen as among the least controversial Cabinet picks, and her nomination advanced out of committee in late January, but House Republicans' razor-thin majority kept her ultimate confirmation in a state of purgatory for the last several months. In recent weeks, it had

seemed as if Stefanik's nomination would advance to the Senate floor, given two U.S. House special elections in Florida in districts that Trump easily won in 2024. Filling those vacant GOP seats would have allowed Stefanik to finally resign from the House and given Republicans, who currently hold 218 seats, a little more breathing room on passing legislation in a growingly divided Congress. Democrats hold 213 seats. Both districts have long been Republican strongholds, and a win by either Democratic candidate would be a major surprise, but House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and other Democratic leaders are looking to at least narrow the margin from November, when Trump carried both districts in the presidential election by more than 30 points. That, coupled with Democrats' upset in a Tuesday special election for a Pennsylvania state Senate seat in Republican-leaning suburbs and farming communities, has given Republicans pause and pushed some members into full panic mode, according to one congressional aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal concerns. □

Los Angeles sheriff's department to retest 4,000 DNA samples after using faulty kits for 8 months



A roll of police tape is left on the windshield of Los Angeles County sheriff's vehicle in the parking lot of its training academy in Whittier, Calif., Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said this week it will retest 4,000 DNA samples and open an internal investigation after learning that it used potentially flawed test kits for eight months.

Sheriff's officials said Wednesday that a test kit manufacturer sent a letter in August warning the department to stop using certain kits that were prone to giving incomplete results. However, the letter was received by a civilian employee who didn't discard the kits or send them back, according to a depart-

ment statement.

The department used the flawed kits from July through February, testing thousands of samples from criminal investigations.

The problem was discovered Monday when a supervisor at the department's Scientific Services Bureau found the manufacturer's letter.

The department said it has opened an internal investigation to assess how much the faulty kits have affected criminal cases, and will retest some 4,000 DNA samples. "We take the integrity of our criminal investigations and the reliability

of our forensic testing very seriously," Sheriff Robert Luna said in a statement. "The Sheriff's Department is working diligently to assess the impact and to prevent such situations from occurring again."

Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said his office had begun working with the sheriff's department to determine the extent of the problem. Sheriff's officials said the bad tests might have led to incomplete results, but they are "not likely to have falsely identified any individual." The department declined to name the manufacturer. □

EPA offers industrial polluters a way to avoid rules on mercury, arsenic and other toxic chemicals

By MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As part of a push to roll back dozens of environmental regulations, the Trump administration is offering coal-fired power plants and other industrial polluters a chance for exemptions from requirements to reduce emissions of toxic chemicals such as mercury, arsenic and benzene. The Environmental Protection Agency has set up an electronic mailbox to allow regulated companies to request a presidential exemption under the Clean Air Act to a host of Biden-era rules. Companies were asked to send an email by Monday seeking permission from President Donald Trump to bypass the new restrictions. The Clean Air Act enables the president to temporarily exempt industrial sites from new rules if the technology required to meet them is not widely available and if the continued activity is in the interest of national security. Environmental groups denounced the administration's offer, calling the email address a "polluters' portal" that could allow hundreds of companies to evade laws meant to protect the environment and public health. Exemptions would be allowed for nine EPA rules issued by the Biden



Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lee Zeldin speaks, Feb 3, 2025, in East Palestine, Ohio.

administration, including limits on mercury, ethylene oxide and other hazardous air pollutants. Mercury exposure can cause brain damage, especially in children. Fetuses are vulnerable to birth defects via exposure in a mother's womb. Margie Alt, campaign director of the Climate Action Campaign, said the request for exemption applications "is a gift to the fossil fuel industry" and further indication of a "polluters-first agenda" under Trump and EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin.

"Companies can now apply for a gold-plated, 'get-out-of-permitting free' card," she said, adding that the latest action marked at least the third time Zeldin has moved to weaken enforcement of environmental laws since he took office less than two months ago. On March 12, he announced a series of actions to roll back landmark environmental regulations, including rules on pollution from coal-fired power plants, climate change and electric vehicles.

Last month, Zeldin said he would push for a 65% spending cut at the agency, saying, "We don't need to be spending all that money that went through the EPA last year." Trump and Zeldin, aided by billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, have also pushed to drastically reduce EPA staffing, and the agency is considering a plan to eliminate its scientific research office. About 1,000 scientists and other employees who help provide the scientific

foundation for EPA rules safeguarding human health and the environment could be fired.

The EPA's offer for companies to request exemptions was first reported by The New York Times.

"Submitting a request via this email box does not entitle the submitter to an exemption," the EPA said in a statement. "The President will make a decision on the merits."

Authority for exemptions "solely rests with the president, not EPA," added EPA spokeswoman Molly Vase-liou.

Former President Joe Biden offered similar exemptions after issuing a rule last year tightening emission standards for ethylene oxide from commercial facilities that sterilize medical equipment, she noted.

Vickie Patton, general counsel for the Environmental Defense Fund, called EPA's action "an invitation to pollute" and an abuse of power by Zeldin. Coal-fired power plants have long used scrubbers and other devices to limit mercury and other toxic pollution and can continue to do so, she said, adding that hundreds of companies nationwide could potentially apply for exemptions that are neither needed nor legal. □

Associated Press

Justice Department eyes combining ATF and DEA as part of broad restructuring

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Department leadership is proposing combining the two agencies responsible for enforcing drug and gun laws as part of a dramatic restructuring of the department, according to a memo reviewed by The Associated Press. The memo from Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche seeks feedback on a reorganization plan that would combine the Drug Enforcement Administration and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives into a single agency "to achieve efficiencies in resources, case deconfliction, and regulatory efforts." It's part of a broader push by the Trump administration to shrink and reshape the federal government that has already led

to a slew of legal challenges. President Donald Trump has directed agencies to develop plans for eliminating employee positions and consolidating programs. Perhaps the most sweeping part of the Justice Department's plan is a push to merge the DEA and ATF, which often work together along with the FBI but are both led by separate directors and are tasked with distinctly different missions. The memo included no details about how the two agencies would be combined, or whether some of the agents would be eliminated. The ATF investigates things like violent crime, gun trafficking, arson and bombings. It also provides technical expertise tracing guns used in crimes and analyzing intelligence in shooting investigations. The DEA, meanwhile, is in charge of enforcing the nation's laws around drugs. □



The Department of Justice headquarters building in Washington is photographed early in the morning, May 14, 2013.

Associated Press

Alleged leader of MS-13 street gang on the East Coast is arrested in Virginia

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

MANASSAS, Va. (AP) — The alleged leader of the violent MS-13 street gang on the East Coast has been arrested in Virginia, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced Thursday. Bondi lauded the the early morning arrest of the 24-year-old man from El Salvador, who was described as one of MS-13's top three leaders in the United States, as a major victory in the Trump administration's effort to crack down on a gang known for brutal violence and extortion. Henry Josue Villatoro Santos was taken into custody in northern Virginia on an outstanding administrative immigration warrant, according to court papers, and was charged with illegal gun possession after agents found several firearms during the search of his home. Bondi said he was living in the U.S. illegally. There was no attorney listed for him in the court docket. Telephone numbers for



Attorney General Pam Bondi, left, and FBI Director Kash Patel, right, listen as Governor Glenn Youngkin speaks about a 24 year-old MS-13 gang leader who was arrested in an operation by the Virginia Homeland Security Task Force in Dale City, VA., on March 27, 2025, during a news conference at the Manassas FBI Field Office, Thursday, March 27, 2025, in Manassas, VA.

Associated Press

relatives could not immediately be found in public records. The administration promoted the arrest as part of its effort to fulfill campaign promises to quash illegal immigration and elimi-

nate gangs. MS-13 gang, or Mara Salvatrucha, was one of eight Latin American criminal organizations declared foreign terrorist organizations by the Trump administration last month. "We want to make our

streets safer," Bondi told reporters. "We want to make our schools safer. We want to make your neighborhoods safer. This guy was living in a neighborhood right around you, no longer."

At the White House, press secretary Karoline Leavitt, citing the arrest, called it "a good day for our country." In the past decade, the U.S. Justice Department has intensified its focus on MS-13, which originated as a neighborhood street gang in Los Angeles, but grew into a transnational gang based in El Salvador. It has members in Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico and thousands of members across the U.S. with numerous branches, or "cliques." The 2016 killings of two high school girls, who were hacked and beaten to death as they walked through their neighborhood on New York's Long Island, focused national attention on the gang. Nisa Mickens, 15, and Kayla Cuevas, 16, friends and classmates at Brentwood High School, were killed with a machete and a baseball bat by a group of young men and teenage boys who had stalked them from a car. More killings followed in the coming months. □

Man accused of setting fire to Tesla vehicles in Las Vegas arrested, police say

By **RIO YAMAT**
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A man who set fire to Tesla vehicles in Las Vegas and who painted the word "resist" for authorities to find at the scene has been arrested,

police announced Tuesday. Paul Hyon Kim, 36, faces charges of arson, possession of an explosive device and shooting into a vehicle in state court, Clark County Sheriff Kevin McMahon said

at a news conference. Kim was expected to be taken into the federal government's custody later Tuesday to face additional charges, said Spencer Evans, the special agent in charge of the Las Vegas FBI division.

An attorney for Kim who could comment on his behalf was not listed Tuesday in court records. Security video played at the news conference showed the suspect, dressed all in black and covering his face, paint the word "resist" across the glass doors of a Tesla service center early on March 18. McMahon said the suspect threw Molotov cocktails crude bombs filled with gasoline or another flammable liquid and fired several rounds from a weapon into multiple vehicles.

McMahon said Tuesday they were "actively investigating" a motive and whether it is connected to other recent cases of vandalism targeting Tesla property across the country. There has been a clear uptick of violent attacks on property carrying the Tesla logo across the U.S. and overseas since President Donald Trump took office and empowered Musk to oversee a new Department of Government Efficiency that has slashed government spending. The attacks are keeping law enforcement busy. Prosecutors in Colorado charged a woman last month in connection with attacks on Tesla dealerships, including Molotov cocktails thrown at vehicles and the words "Nazi cars" spray-painted on a build-

ing. And federal agents in South Carolina have arrested a man they say set fire to Tesla charging stations near Charleston. Some of the most prominent incidents have been reported in left-leaning cities in the Pacific Northwest, like Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, where anti-Trump and anti-Musk sentiment runs high. An Oregon man faces charges after allegedly throwing several Molotov cocktails at a Tesla store in Salem, then returning another day and shooting out windows. In the Portland suburb of Tigard, more than a dozen bullets were fired at a Tesla showroom last week, damaging vehicles and windows, the second time in a week that the store was targeted. □



Police are investigating after several vehicles were set on fire at a Tesla service center, Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

North Korea sent 3,000 more troops to Russia, according to South's assessment

By KIM TONG-HYUNG

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

North Korea sent around 3,000 additional troops to Russia in January and February in continued support for Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, South Korea's military said Thursday in its latest assessment.

The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea has also been sending more missiles, artillery equipment and ammunition to help Russia and that North Korea could increase its weapons supplies further depending on the war situation. Russia and Ukraine recently agreed on a limited ceasefire, though both sides have accused each other of violations. The military equipment North Korea has sent to Russia includes a "considerable amount" of short-range ballistic missiles, 170 millimeter self-propelled howitzers and around 220 units of 240 millimeter multiple rocket launchers. North Korea has sent approximately 11,000 military personnel to fight in the war against Ukraine in its first involvement in a large-scale conflict since the 1950-53 Korean War, and the Joint Chiefs assessed that around 4,000 of them have been killed or wounded. South Korea's National Intelligence Service previously attributed the high North Korean casualties to the troops' likely struggles



In this photo provided Thursday, March 27, 2025, by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un, center left in a black jacket, stands by what appeared to be a large reconnaissance drone at an undisclosed location in North Korea, earlier this week. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government.

Associated Press

in adapting to drones and other elements of modern warfare. North Korean troops are further disadvantaged by the crude tactics of their Russian commanders, who have sent them into assault campaigns without providing rear-fire support, the spy agency told lawmakers in January. Still, Ukrainian military and intelligence officials have assessed that the North Koreans are gaining crucial battlefield experience and have been key to Russia's strategy of overwhelming Ukraine by throwing large numbers of soldiers into the

battle for Kursk.

The South Korean military report came after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressed his unwavering support for Russia's war in Ukraine during a meeting with a top Russian security official, Sergei Shoigu, last week in Pyongyang. State media reports said Kim and Shoigu reaffirmed their commitment to uphold a major mutual defense treaty agreed upon last year. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told Russian media on Thursday that the governments were discussing a potential visit

by Kim to Moscow but did not specify when it might take place.

"We always talk to everyone about exchanging visits. We are always preparing," he told RIA Novosti.

Kim showcases new military drones

Kim's military support of Russia has raised concerns that he may receive Russian technology transfers in return, further strengthening the threat posed by his nuclear-armed military. Experts say aircraft and drones are among the potential areas where North Korea might seek to ac-

quire Russian technology and know-how.

North Korean state media said Thursday that Kim observed tests of newly developed reconnaissance and attack drones this week and called for their increased production. Kim in recent months has been emphasizing the development of drones, and the tests were the latest display of his country's growing military capabilities.

Photos released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency showed Kim observing a large reconnaissance drone resembling the U.S.-made RQ-4B Global Hawk, first unveiled during a 2023 military exhibition. Other photos showed Kim boarding what appeared to be an airborne early-warning aircraft, similar in appearance to the Boeing E-7 Wedgetail. Other images showed exploding drones crashing into military vehicles used as targets.

The agency said the test demonstrated the reconnaissance drone's ability to track multiple targets and monitor troop movements on land and at sea, potentially enhancing North Korea's intelligence-gathering operations and ability to neutralize enemy threats. The report said the new exploding drones are designed for various attack missions and feature unspecified artificial intelligence capabilities. □

5 people have been seriously wounded in an Amsterdam stabbing. The suspect is in custody

AMSTERDAM (AP) — A knife-wielding assailant seriously wounded five people in a stabbing attack on a busy shopping street in Amsterdam before he was taken into custody, police said Thursday.

The man who carried out the attack in the Dutch city was injured as he was stopped by a passerby. The attack happened near Dam Square in the late afternoon. No motive has been established.

"The suspect was detained with the help of a civilian," police spokesperson Eline Roovers told The Associated Press.

Police cordoned off the area and several ambulances were called to the scene. A trauma helicopter landed on the square but later departed. A city council meeting involving Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema was interrupted because of the stabbing. Last year, the city experienced several stabbings attributed to people with mental health issues. Amsterdam set up a hotline last month for residents to report concerns about irrational behavior. The reporting mechanism was recommended after an investigation showed that a man was stabbed to death by his neighbor. □



Police officers gather not far from the area after a stabbing near Dam Square in central Amsterdam, Thursday, March 27, 2025.

Associated Press

Putin says U.S. push for Greenland rooted in history, vows to uphold Russian interest in the Arctic

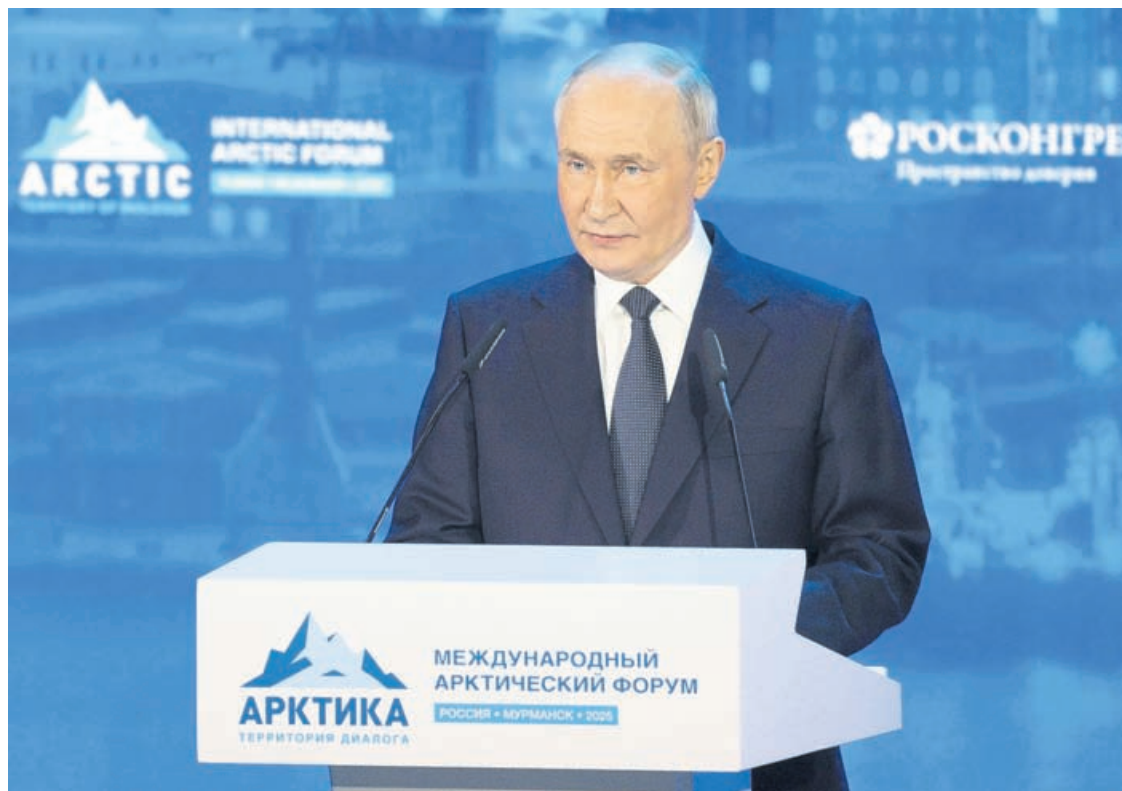
By **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV**
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that President Donald Trump's push for control over Greenland wasn't surprising given longtime U.S. interest in the mineral-rich territory.

Speaking at a policy forum in the Arctic port of Murmansk, Putin noted that the United States first considered plans to win control over Greenland in the 19th century, and then offered to buy it from Denmark after World War II.

"It can look surprising only at first glance and it would be wrong to believe that this is some sort of extravagant talk by the current U.S. administration," Putin said. "It's obvious that the United States will continue to systematically advance its geostrategic, military-political and economic interests in the Arctic."

Trump irked much of Europe by suggesting that the United States should in some form control the self-governing, mineral-rich territory of Denmark, a U.S.



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks at the plenary session of the International Arctic Forum in Murmansk, Russia, Thursday, March 27, 2025.

Associated Press

ally and NATO member. As the nautical gateway to the Arctic and North Atlantic approaches to North America, Greenland has broader strategic value as both China and Russia seek access to its waterways and natural resources.

U.S. Vice President JD

Vance and his wife are due to visit an American military base in Greenland on Friday on a trip that was scaled back after an uproar by Greenlanders and Danes. Speaking on Thursday, Putin noted that Russia is worried about NATO's activities in the Arctic and

will respond by strengthening its military capability in the polar region.

"We are certainly concerned about NATO members describing the Far North as the region of possible conflicts," he said, noting that Russia's neighbors Finland and Sweden have

joined the alliance. "Russia has never threatened anyone in the Arctic, but we will closely follow the developments and mount an appropriate response by increasing our military capability and modernizing military infrastructure."

Russia has sought to assert its influence over wide areas of the Arctic in competition with the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway as shrinking polar ice from the warming planet offers new opportunities for resources and shipping routes. China also has shown an increasing interest in the region, believed to hold up to one-fourth of the Earth's undiscovered oil and gas. "We won't allow any infringement on our country's sovereignty, reliably safeguard our national interests while supporting peace and stability in the polar region," Putin said.

While pledging to strengthen Russia's military foothold in the Arctic, Putin said that Moscow was holding the door open to broader international cooperation in the region. □

UN warns of 'severe' human rights abuses in Haiti as illegal weapons proliferate

By **DÁNICA COTO**
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A steady stream of illegal weapons smuggled into Haiti is fueling an in-

crease in gang violence and leading to severe human rights abuses, according to a U.N. report released Thursday. More than 4,200 people

were killed from July to February, and another 1,356 were injured, the report found. It was issued after William O'Neill, the U.N. human rights commissioner's expert on Haiti, recently visited the troubled Caribbean country.

While much of the violence has been unleashed by gangs who formed a coalition last year known as "Viv Ansanm," a growing number of people are being killed by self-defense groups and mobs, including at least 77 suspected gang members slain in November after gunmen tried to attack a community in the Port-au-Prince capital, the report stated. It also found that the number of people killed and injured by authorities fighting gangs "remained ex-

tremely high." More than 2,000 people were killed during police operations from July to February, a 60% increase compared with the 1,253 killings reported from February to July of 2024. Some 73% of victims killed by law enforcement were reportedly gang members, but 27% "were not associated with gangs and were often struck by stray bullets while in the streets or at home," the report said. It noted that in some cases, police opened fire from armored vehicles "where people were walking or selling goods on the streets."

It also said police have been reportedly involved in summary executions of suspected gang members, their families, "or in-

dividuals who, when intercepted, were unable to provide identification or offer a sufficient explanation for their presence in the area."

The report stated that nearly 1,000 firearms belonging to Haiti's National Police have been diverted in the past four years, and that credible sources have said officers are selling some weapons on the black market.

A police spokesperson did not immediately return a message requesting comment.

The report said gangs also obtain illegal weapons from private security companies that use them. Overall, an estimated 270,000 to 500,000 illegal weapons are circulating across Haiti. □



A woman cries after her friend, Valérie Saint-Fort, behind, fell dead from a bullet wound after soldiers fired their guns into the air as a tribute during the funeral of two soldiers in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Monday, March 17, 2025.

Associated Press

Adriaan Laclé One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century



(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the bigger roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his heyday he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact,

he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion func-



tions as a townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on

Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy



and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curaçao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique

method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa & gold-mineranch.com.





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Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to travelling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one of Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking

lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area fur-

ther down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! ☐

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Aruba Airport Prepares to Launch Operations in New U.S. Check-In Terminal

ORANJESTAD – As part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing the passenger experience, Aruba Airport is preparing to open its brand-new U.S. check-in terminal for airline and passenger operations. To ensure a seamless transition, Aruba Airport, in collaboration with Chrysalis Global Consulting, a specialist in Operational Readiness and Airport Transition (ORAT), conducted a series of mock trials.

These trials, conducted over a week, involved volunteer passengers who participated in simulated check-in processes. This allowed Aruba Airport to test and refine various aspects of the new check-in terminal, including the baggage handling system and passenger flow. The trials provided valuable insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of the new facilities, ensuring that all systems are optimized for the official launch.

The successful rollout of this new facility is made possible through the collaboration and dedication of airline partners and ground handlers, who play a crucial role in ensuring a smooth transition for travelers. Their ongoing support and participation in training and trial runs are essential to successfully complete the final phases of preparation.

As of Tuesday, April 8, 2025, the soft opening will commence. On this date, all airlines with General Air Services as ground handler will transition to the new check-in terminal. This includes Delta, United Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and Spirit. By Tuesday,

April 29, 2025, it is anticipated that all US Carriers, including those with AGS/Swissport as ground handler, will be operating from the new check-in terminal. The final phase of the transition will include JetBlue and American Airlines.

The timeline for implementation is as follows:

March – Completion of training and trial runs with the Aruba Airport Authority (AAA) team, airlines, and ground handlers.

April – Initial airline teams begin operations in the new check-in terminal.

May – Full opening, offering a smoother, more efficient check-in experience for all U.S.-bound travelers.

"This transition marks a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to enhance the airport experience. By working closely with airline partners and ground handlers, all systems are being put in place to provide passengers with a streamlined check-in process," said Marylou Van der Linden, Operations Manager at Aruba Airport.

The patience and cooperation of passengers and stakeholders are greatly appreciated as preparations are finalized. Further details will be shared in the coming weeks as the full opening in May approaches.

About AUA Airport

About AUA Airport AUA Airport is one of the busiest airports in the Caribbean region, with more than 25 different airlines operating into Aruba contributing to processing more than 3 million passengers per year and providing



air service to 31 cities and 45 non-stop destinations worldwide. AUA Airport's markets served comprise of 77% from the United States & Canada, 15% from Latin America, 4% from Europe, and 4% from Dutch Caribbean.

AUA Airport attributes this to the island's stable economic and political climate, hospitable and multilingual population, and safe environment. AUA Airport's aspiration is to become one of the most Sustainable, Safe, and Future Proof airports of the

Latin America & Caribbean region, providing a trusted workplace, modern airport facilities and excellent customer service which reflects Aruban hospitality, contributing to a prosperous future for Aruba.

Learn more about what's happening at AUA Airport by visiting www.airportaruba.com and connect with AUA Airport on [Twitter.com/Aruba_Airport](https://twitter.com/Aruba_Airport), [Facebook.com/ArubaAirport](https://facebook.com/ArubaAirport), [Instagram.com/arubaairport/](https://instagram.com/arubaairport/), [TikTok.com/@arubaairport](https://tiktok.com/@arubaairport) and [Linkedin.com/ArubaAirport](https://linkedin.com/ArubaAirport).

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Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the sub existence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.



Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary devel-

opment on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works. The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon



was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.



Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of

Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Communi-

ty Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barber-shop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.



Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □

Aruban snacks and where to find them



ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes

even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can

also find pastechis and kroketts at local bakeries and snack shops, like Bright Bakery in Piedra Plat, Huchada in Santa Cruz or Pastechi House in the city center. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you're at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batido shops next the flea markets downtown, or if you're on your way to San Nicolas, at Mauchi Smoothies and Juice Bar in Savaneta (located at the side of the main road).

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/



shaved ice vendor:

1. Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
2. Along the main road next to the airport field.
3. At the California Light House.
4. At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com



CROSSWORD

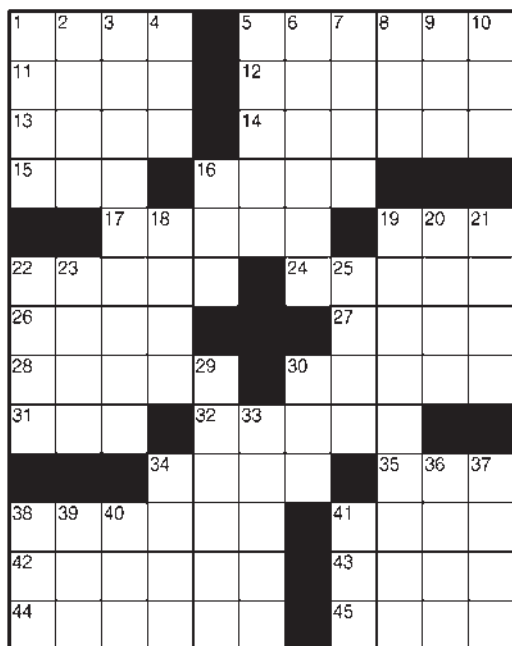
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 43 Onion layer
1 Informal farewell
5 Collect \$200, maybe
11 Final, e.g.
12 Reverberated
13 Marina spot
14 Worn down
15 — Aviv
16 State frankly
17 Diamond corners
19 Newsstand buy, for short
22 Crab's place
24 Hackneyed
26 St. Louis sight
27 Mob event
28 Gags
30 Stately dance
31 Braying beast
32 Witty remarks
34 Crooned
35 Diving bird
38 Speculative question
41 Lot unit
42 Pal of Pooh

DOWN

- 1 Final, e.g.
2 Car bar
3 Members of the offense
4 Band blaster
5 Irritate
6 Clue heading
7 Display
8 Grassy clump
9 "Golly!"
10 Strange
16 Cigar bit
18 Ibuprofen target
19 They hold letters
20 Scads
21 Stan of jazz
22 Mexican peninsula
23 Amorous archer
25 Snare
29 Knight's attendant
30 Costume part
33 Hungry, probably
34 Put away
36 "Exodus" author
37 Lane's co-worker
38 Fly catcher
39 That woman
40 Pro vote
41 Pharaoh's symbol



3-29

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-29

CRYPTOQUOTE

V O L F H Y H H M H Y N S W H R D
K D C T F H B T H N D B ' L Q H
L S U H L F H Y , X H H E W H V B C S A Y
F H D Y L ; V ' J J R L D C L F H Y H

O S Y H M H Y . — D . D . W V J B H

Cryptoquote: I ONLY HOPE THAT
WE NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF ONE THING — THAT
IT ALL STARTED WITH A MOUSE. — WALT
DISNEY

Cruise ship Schedule: March 24 - 30 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	24	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	25	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C	1
WED	26	AMERA	08.00	23.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
FRI	28	REGAL PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	29	STAR CLIPPER	10.00	19.00	C	1
SUN	30	OCEANIA VISTA	10.00	20.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

Supermarket hours

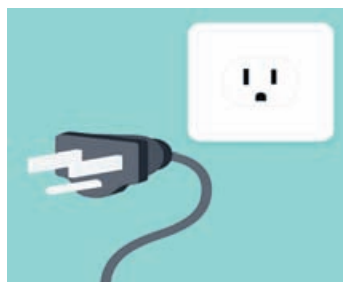


Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7

Role models. Peer pressure. Rewards. What really gets people to act more sustainably?



A plastic beverage bottle appears on the sand in Sandy Hook, N.J. on Feb. 6, 2022.

Associated Press

By **LEANNE ITALIE**
AP Lifestyles Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Lauren Click founded a nonprofit a few years ago offering free composting education to schools around the country. Today, 112 schools participate, yet she can't get her boyfriend to properly separate his trash at home in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Adults have more set behaviors than young kids. I try to model a behavior and hopefully he does it," said Click, executive director of her Let's Go Compost organization. "But it's also like, I'm not his parent. I'm not going to berate him every day or ruin my relationship over this. I just fish a bunch of stuff out of the trash."

Her efforts, which she calls 50-50 effective with her partner, point to an important question in the field of environmental psychology: What's the best approach when looking to influence colleagues, friends and family to live more sustainably? What's the worst? Researchers say Click is on the right track. Modeling can work, though as with other approaches, it depends on who the sender is, how the message is

framed and who it's intended for. Here's a look at some of the issues and strategies involved in making people more aware of their role in climate change, which is caused by the burning of fuels like gasoline, coal and gas, and encouraging them to cut waste and protect the natural world. Peer pressure is at play Magnus Bergquist is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. His

research focuses on how to persuade people to adopt more eco-friendly behavior. In a recent study reviewing studies in his area, Bergquist homed in on the influence of others. "What we found was the most effective strategy for changing behavior is social norms, pointing to what other people are doing or people's perception of other people's approval or disapproval," he said. "But interestingly, when we ask people about the

effectiveness of different interventions, people tend to say that social norms are among the least effective ones," Bergquist added. The bottom line: Humans are generally social animals, which isn't a surprise. But most people underestimate how much they're influenced by social norms, and campaigns are often based on strategies that are less effective, he said. Financial incentives also work, to a degree While Click is unlikely to pay off her boyfriend to do better, Bergquist said financial incentives or disincentives are the second most effective strategy (behind social norms) in getting people to take more sustainable steps in their lives. That covers everything from bonus cash in a community or office to tax benefits, he said. But there's a caveat. □



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San Nicolas

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Central: Tel. 585 1965

San Nicolas:

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
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A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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So long, Park City. Sundance Film Festival to relocate to Boulder, Colorado, in 2027

By **JAKE COYLE**
AP Film Writer

After a yearlong search, the Sundance Film Festival announced Thursday that its new home will be Boulder, Colorado, keeping Sundance in the mountains but moving it out of Park City, the Utah ski town that had for decades provided the premier independent film gathering its picturesque snowy backdrop.

Organizers said that after 40 years in the mountains, the festival had outgrown Park City, and lacked the necessary theaters or affordable housing to continue hosting what has become one of North America's most sprawling movie events. Sundance had narrowed down the options to Salt Lake City (with a smaller presence in Park City), Cincinnati and Boulder.

Boulder emerged as their choice due to its close proximity to nature, its small-town charm and an engaged community that, organizer said, provides Sundance the ideal setting for its future.

"Boulder is a tech town, it's a college town, it's an arts town, and it's a mountain town," Amanda Kelso, acting chief executive of the Sundance Institute, said in an interview Thursday from Boulder. "At 100,000 people, a larger town than Park City, it gives us the space to expand."

Kelso, Sundance Institute board chair Ebs Burnough and Eugene Hernandez, director of the festival and head of programming, spoke shortly before announcing the festival's move in Boulder. Local officials, who helped lure Sundance with \$34 million in tax credits over 10 years, applauded the decision.

"Here in our state we celebrate the arts and film industry as a key economic driver, job creator and important contributor to our thriving culture," Colorado Gov. Jared Polis (Dem.) said in a statement.

Reacting to the decision, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox



The marquee of the Egyptian Theatre appears during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah on Jan. 28, 2020. Associated Press

(Rep.) said Thursday that Sundance will come to regret leaving Utah.

"As I've said from the beginning, we wanted Sundance to stay," Cox said in a statement. "We made that clear to their leadership and put together a highly competitive package. Ultimately, this decision is theirs to make, but I believe it's a mistake and that, one day, they'll realize they left behind not just a place, but their heritage."

A change endorsed by Sundance founder Robert Redford

A shift from Park City to Boulder means Sundance stays in the mountains but trades a luxury ski resort enclave for a growing, outdoorsy small city. The mile-high Colorado city set in the foothills of the Rockies also maintains a sense of surrounding nature something organizers stressed as a major factor in their decision. Boulder's four-block pedestrian mall on Pearl Street, with nearby theaters, could provide a similar sense of central hub like Park City's Main Street. The Macky Auditorium, on the University of Colorado campus, is expected to be a central stage for Sundance.

The Sundance Institute was founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, who sought a lo-

cation far from Hollywood to foster independent voices in film. In 1984, the institute took over the Sundance Film Festival, but the nonprofit's mission of helping young filmmakers grow through labs and workshops Redford's real passion continued year-round away from the festival.

The 88-year-old Redford, who attended the University of Colorado in Boulder in his youth, gave the move his blessing.

"Words cannot express the sincere gratitude I have for Park City, the state of Utah, and all those in the Utah community that have helped to build the organization," Redford said in a statement. "What we've created is remarkably special and defining. As change is inevitable, we must always evolve and grow, which has been at the core of our survival."

How Sundance chose its new home

The festival made "ethos and equity values" one of its criteria, prompting many to wonder how much local politics would influence the choice by Sundance, which emphasizes inclusivity. Gov. Cox is currently weighing a bill that would ban the flying of certain flags at schools and government buildings, including the LGBTQ pride flag.

Organizers said Boulder's "welcoming environment aligns with the ethos the Sundance Film Festival developed in Park City."

"This process started 18 months ago and we've been in Utah for 40 years. So politics really didn't guide the process," Burnough said Thursday. "It was really and truly about evolution. That's where it landed. We didn't constantly spend time examining what bill was going forward or may or may not be signed."

With its current contract expiration date looming, the hunt for a new host city began in earnest in April 2024. The initial group of six contenders also included Atlanta, Louisville, Kentucky and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

What Sundance has meant for Park City, and the film world

Before packing up, Sundance will have one last edition in Park City in January 2026.

"The Sundance Film Festival will be the Sundance Film Festival wherever we go. What's consistent is our mission," said Hernandez. "This is a festival of global discovery. What's exciting about Boulder is this is a place we can build."

Over the years, Sundance in Park City swelled into a premier marketplace for American film, drawing stu-

dio executives and parka-wearing celebrities into the Wasatch mountains every January. It helped launch countless filmmakers over the years, from Steven Soderbergh ("Sex, Lies and Videotape") to Ryan Coogler ("Fruitvale Station"). Sundance scored its first best picture winner with "CODA" in 2022.

Sundance meant big business for Utah and Park City. In 2024, the festival had some 72,840 in-person attendees, 24,200 of whom were coming from out of state. According to the festival's economic impact report, out-of-state visitors spent an estimated \$106.4 million in Utah during the festival. Its total economic impact was estimated to be \$132 million, with 1,730 jobs for Utah residents and \$69.7 million in Utah wages. But the festival had also sparred with local ski resorts Park City's other major money maker as festivalgoers filled the hotels and left the slopes virtually empty for two weeks during peak ski season. The festival was a boon to some local businesses, but a hindrance to others. For visitors flying into the 10-day festival, ballooning rental costs increasingly factored into attending.

All three top contenders budgeted millions to lure the lucrative festival to their city. Cincinnati set aside \$2.5 million for Sundance and another \$2.5 million to come if it was chosen. Salt Lake City offered Sundance \$3.5 million to stay in Utah.

Sundance's relocation puts two of the top U.S. film festivals in Colorado. The Telluride Film Festival, held further west in the state, runs in late August. □



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NFL competition committee proposes moving touchback to 35 and making dynamic kickoff permanent

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL competition committee is recommending making the dynamic kickoff rule permanent and moving touchbacks to the 35-yard line in hopes of generating even more returns.

The competition committee released several potential rule changes for 2025 on Wednesday, including an expansion of instant replay that will be considered next week at the league meetings in Palm Beach, Florida. Any rule change must be approved by 24 out of 32 team owners.

Teams submitted several proposals last week that also could be voted on at the league meetings, including banning the "tush push" and changing playoff seeding rules.

Owners approved a major change to the kickoff last year on a one-year trial basis and the committee recommended another change to increase the rate of returns without increasing the risk of injuries. The league had 332 additional returns last season with the rate increasing



The Kansas City Chiefs kickoff to the Philadelphia Eagles at the start of the NFL Super Bowl 59 football game, Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, in New Orleans.

Associated Press

from a record-low 21.8% in 2023 to 32.8% last season. The committee hopes that moving the touchback on kicks that reach the end zone on the fly from the 30 to the 35 will incentivize kicking teams to opt for shorter kicks that lead to more returns with a projection that the rate of return could double.

"We think that's a lot of motivation for people to kick the ball in play and get returns back in the game," NFL Competition Committee chairman Rich McKay said.

The committee also proposed allowing teams to declare their intention for an onside kick at any point in the game when they are trailing instead of only in the fourth quarter and had a slight tweak in the formation in hopes of slightly increasing the recovery rate. There was no interest by any team or the committee in changing the onside kick to a fourth and long play like there had been in the past, with league executive Troy Vincent calling it too "gimmicky."

The committee proposed a few other tweaks to how players on the return team can align before the kick but the basics will remain the same with the kicker lining up at his own 35, the 10 coverage players at the 40, and at least nine blockers lined up in the "setup zone" between the 30- and 35-yard line and up to two returners in the landing zone inside the 20.

Any kick that reaches the end zone in the air can be returned, or the receiving team can opt for a touchback, which now will be at the 35.

Only the kicker and two returners are allowed to move until the ball hits the ground or is touched by a returner inside the 20.

According to the NFL, there were 59 returns of at least 40 yards last season, the most in the league since 2016, and seven TD returns. The concussion rate fell 43% from the previous three years and there were the fewest lower-extremity strains on kick return plays since 2018. "We ended up with an injury rate very much like a play

from scrimmage," NFL executive Jeff Miller said. "That's what the goal was. If the rule is passed and we do end up with more returns, we would presume, without any evidence to the contrary, that the injury rate will stay similar to a run or pass play."

Miller also added that the chance of injury with more returns on kicks would be somewhat negated by fewer punts — which have a higher injury rate than any other current play — thanks to improved field position under the new rule.

The committee also proposed an expansion of instant replay to allow replay assist to consult on-field officials to overrule objective calls such as facemask penalties, whether there was forcible contact to the head or neck area, horse-collar tackles or tripping if there was "clear and obvious" evidence that a foul didn't occur. Replay would also be able to overturn a roughing the kicker or running into the kicker penalty if video replay showed the defender made contact with the ball. □



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) moves into Indiana Pacers forward Pascal Siakam (43) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

Associated Press

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The NBA will not bring back its All-Star

NBA will not keep All-Star mini-tournament for 2026, is 'back to the drawing board'

Game mini-tournament next season. Commissioner Adam Silver said Thursday that the format used last month — a four-team tournament made up of 24 NBA All-Stars and another team of rookies and sophomores that played their way in by winning the Rising Stars event on All-Star Friday, all the All-Star matchups playing untimed games to a target score of 40 points — "was a miss."

"We're not there in terms of creating an All-Star experience that we can be proud

of and our players can be proud of," Silver said.

The game is shifting to NBC next season as part of the league's new broadcast deal, and Silver said the league and the network are talking about what may work. The league tried something new this season with hopes of sparking some competitiveness, which the game has lacked for years. "We're a bit back to the drawing board," Silver said. Some players liked the All-Star format this season, oth-

ers did not and a few didn't seem to have much of an opinion either way. The tournament was put into place after the 2024 All-Star Game saw more points than ever — a 211-186 final score that set a slew of records and essentially was the last straw for the league.

"I think it was a good step in the right direction to rein-vigorate the game in some way," All-Star MVP Stephen Curry of the host Golden State Warriors said after last month's event. □



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Flyers fire coach John Tortorella in midst of another losing season

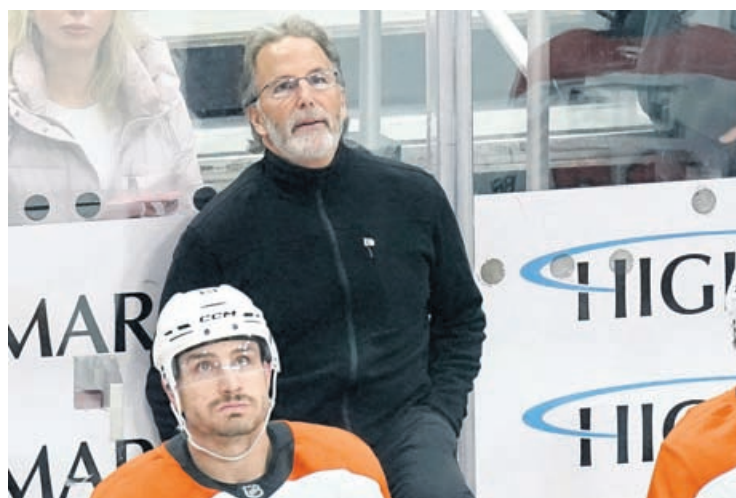
By **DAN GELSTON**
AP Sports Writer

John Tortorella popped off after another Philadelphia loss — the sixth straight on his watch — and declared he was not interested in learning how to coach a losing team in another empty season. It's not his worry anymore. The Flyers fired Tortorella on Thursday with nine games left in another losing season for a franchise that hasn't been in the playoffs since 2020.

The Flyers are last in the Metropolitan Division at 28-36-9 for 65 points under the notoriously brusque Tortorella. The Flyers suffered their sixth straight loss Tuesday night, 7-2 to Toronto.

Tortorella, who won a Stanley Cup with Tampa Bay in 2004, said after the game he was not "really interested in learning how to coach in this type of season, where we're at right now."

"But I have to do a better job," he said. "So this falls on me, getting the team prepared to play the proper



Philadelphia Flyers head coach John Tortorella stands behind his bench during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins Monday, Dec. 23, 2024, in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press

way until we get to the end." The Flyers will get to the end without him.

The Flyers named Brad Shaw the interim coach, starting Thursday night against Montreal.

Flyers general manager Danny Briere said the decision to fire the coach with the season inching toward the end wasn't necessarily because of Tortorella's comments. He noted they were just "one of

things that happened along the way." "I feel there's probably more the frustration of the game and getting shellacked there in Toronto. The embarrassment that we all felt," Briere told reporters in Philadelphia. "I tend to be careful with that and not put too much stock into it. I put it more as he was frustrated with how things have gone lately, and he was embarrassed by the loss that night,

just like a lot of our players were." The Flyers have lost 11 of their last 12 games and won only six times over the last 25 games — a massive blow for a rebuilding team that had mild playoff hopes entering the season.

"Is there one thing that happened? It's not one thing. It's a series of things that have happened, and probably a little bit more in the last three weeks, that has escalated since probably around the trade deadline," Briere said. Tortorella, who brandished his reputation as a fiery, no-nonsense coach on a team still mostly full of young 20-somethings finding their way in the NHL, went 97-107-33 for the Flyers and was fired with one year left on his contract. The Flyers haven't won the Stanley Cup since the last of their two straight championships in 1975. They last played in the Stanley Cup Final in 2010.

Briere championed the job Tortorella did last season as he guided the Flyers to the

last game of the season with meaningful hockey to play. The Flyers were widely predicted by experts, fans and oddsmakers to finish near the bottom of the NHL.

Briere preached patience over playoffs again this season, even with the ascension of rookie star Matvei Michkov, who has lived up to the hype with 51 points in 71 games. The 66-year-old Tortorella did come under scrutiny this season when he healthy scratched Michkov or benched him for long periods, explaining it was part of a tough-love approach toward the Russian's development.

"Not everybody is able to take the hard coaching that John Tortorella put on Matvei. I've been amazed by how he's responded to it," Briere said. "You've seen him get benched, you've seen him get scratched, and what does he do? He comes back, and all he wants to do is stick it back to you, or stick it back to Torts." □